

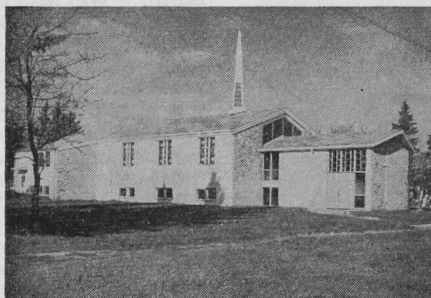
# THE PARISH MESSENGER

A PERSONAL VISITOR TO THE PARISHES

VOLUME 10

WINNIPEG, MAN., JUNE, 1955

NUMBER 4



**THE GIMLI CHURCH AND PARISH  
WELCOME YOU TO**

**THE SEVENTIETH  
ANNUAL CONVENTION OF  
THE ICELANDIC SYNOD**

of the

**UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH  
IN AMERICA**

**PASTOR—The Rev. Haraldur S. Sigmar**

**PRESIDENT—Dr. V. J. Eylands**

**DATES—June 25th to 30th 1955 (inclusive)**

## THE PARISH MESSENGER

News Journal of the Icelandic  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod of  
America.

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Printed quarterly in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The REV. S. O. THORLAKSSON, Editor.  
240 San Fernando Way  
San Francisco 27 Calif., U.S.A.

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### The Editor's Report

All the Parishes of our Synod having resident Pastors have sent in fairly regular News Flashes to the Parish Messenger during the year. In fact, a goodly number of Parishes with only part time pastoral service have also sent in News Flashes from time to time. We are therefore happy to report almost 100% reporting from the Parishes.

However, there are several individual congregations within the Pastor-served Parishes from whom we have not been able to get reports of local activities. There are six Pastors who have been doing their own reporting. There are seven Lay-reporters who also have done an excellent job of reporting on time. Of course, we have had to send out advance notices quarterly to all Reporters, Lay as well as Clergy, but we like to believe that these were just greetings from the Editor and not necessarily gentle reminders except in a very few cases.

Were we to suggest an ideal arrangement for Parish reporting, it would be something like this:—To really cover our Synod, we should have at least a staff of 16 Reporters. Were half of them to report in turn regularly (and without reminders!) for every other issue of the Parish Messenger, no heavy burden would be the load of anyone, and the result would be just the right amount of News Items (with some editing!) for the space allotted in each issue according to the present size of the Parish Messenger.

We have tried to present timely subjects for reading in the other pages of each issue. Much as these contributions have been appreciated, we cannot evaluate here their effect

in the hearts and minds of our readers. We can only say **thank you** to those who have so willingly responded. But we must make special mention of the very outstanding contribution of the last page of each issue. The consistently high tone and inspirational quality of our Stewardship Secretary's reporting would gladden the heart of any Editor. We are confident that the jottings of this department have contributed much to the thinking and working of our Pastors and Parishioners in their efforts to carry out the Command of our Master to be Faithful Stewards.

In conclusion, and also because this is the last issue which it will be our privilege to edit, we wish to tell you how much we have appreciated the cooperation of all who have helped to make each issue of the Parish Messenger possible. Especially are we grateful to the President and Treasurer of Synod who have carried the brunt of the work of each quarter, proof-reading and distribution. This has been one of the advantages of this long-range Editorship! Yes, speaking of this long-range editorship, we have come to realize that it is not fair to the constituency to have the Editor so far away from the center of activities. But since two consecutive Conventions of Synod have voted yours truly into the Office, we have tried to do our best. We are most grateful for the confidence thus placed in us, and also for the many expressions of appreciation received. This Editorship has been one of the many pleasant experiences of our variegated existence both at home and abroad.

As we now face "the sunset years" of our life, we shall have many happy experiences to relive in memory. Our only regret shall be that we could not be used more in the service of our Synod and of the Church. We shall continue to be your Missionary-at-large in this Area among the many unchurched of Icelandic origin. We shall always pray for the continued usefulness of our Synod in the Master's Vineyard and wish you all "joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope (and in good works) through the Power of the Holy Ghost".

## A PRE-FOUNDER . . . The Rev. Pall Thorlaksson

He must work quickly before the Secret within him overpowered and shackled him! . . .

There were those who listened. They were the young men who yearned for new homes of their own. "Bring us to Winnipeg, Pastor! Help us to find work there. You speak the English Language; we shall learn it too, but we can work with our hands and our backs while we learn to speak it."

Pall brought them to Winnipeg, walked the streets with his weary men and one by one found work for each of them. One day, with jobs secured for most of them, he was surprised to meet two more of his young parishioners on the street.

"Oh, Pastor Thorlaksson, we have been searching for you!" Johann Hallson's grip was like a vise as he seized the minister's hand.

"Is it work you wish to find here?" the Pastor asked.

"No, Pastor, it is not work we want. Not now. First we want to find a place for our people to live. We came to find you, hoping you would lead us . . ." Arni Bjornsson looked earnestly at the minister. "You will come, will you not? The three of us—we are young, we are strong! We can even walk into the New Land if we must!"

Walk into the New Land! It was well that Arni did not know the Secret. "Yes, Arni, I shall go with you to the New Land, but we need not walk. I have some money for our fare." . . .

A few days later, Pall and his two friends arrived at Pembina, the old trading post in the northeast corner of the Dakota Territory. They were walking down the dusty road that separated the cluster of log and frame dwellings when Johann suddenly pointed to a building a short distance away. "See! It is Magnus and Samson. There—coming out of the Land Office."

The three ran to overtake their friends. Magnus Stefansson and Samson Bjarnason stare in amazement as they recognized the three, and for a few moments there was boisterous greetings. Then Samson



Rev. Pall Thorlaksson  
Pre-founder

fairly shouted with joy as he told of the quarter sections of land on which he and Magnus had filed. "Oh, this is a day we shall long remember! 1878—it is a year we can never forget! It is the year when we found our New Iceland in the Dakota Territory."

It was May. Pall and his two land-seeking companions walked south and west along the Tongue River. They crossed a sand ridge and found a wooded valley with the Pembina Mountains blue in the distance. Here along the river was timber for houses and barns, and they need not dig for water. And the mountains, small as they were, somehow reminded the young men of the majestic ranges of Iceland . . . Soon there were trees toppling to the ground and dragged by hand to a clearing. On June 23 a cabin stood ready, the first home for the nine Icelanders who had now arrived from Gimli. Twelve by fourteen feet it measured, and only five feet under the eaves, but Pall's friends were happy. It stood there stalwart and snug, a



*Rev. Jon Bjarnason, D.D.  
Founder of Synod.*

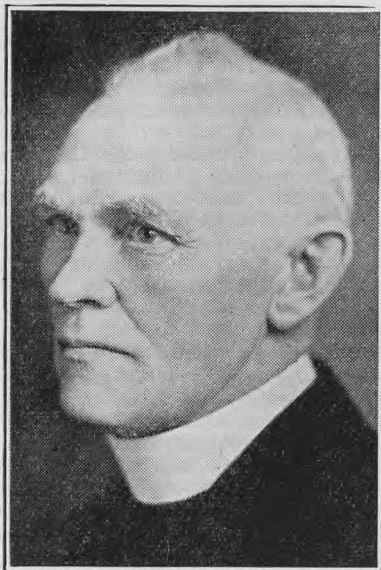
token of the many happy homes that would be built.

It was not, however, until after another long winter of suffering at Gimli that Pall succeeded in bringing a band of settlers with him to the Tongue River area. This time his parents and brothers came with him, and they filed on the land which was eventually to become the site of the present village of Mountain, North Dakota . . .

The grim months of another winter threatened starvation for some of his people. And the Secret within . . . it was beginning to make itself known. From farmers in other parts of the Pembina territory, Pall obtained large quantities of turnips. It was the only food that some of his people had. From house to house, the young minister went, giving encouragement, bringing spiritual manna where he could not give bread.

Always now, the Secret goaded him, threatened and persecuted. And locked in his heart was a deep hurt which only his family knew . . .

The harvest was bountiful that year — 1880. The summer had been pleasant. House after house had been erected . . . Joyfully, Pall Thorlaksson preached in the little houses, and dreamed with his flock of the little white steepled churches . . . of church bells ringing out over the wooded valley. For his people, the days of hunger were past. Yea, with the years they would know prosperity, security and comfort.



*Runolfur Marteinsson, D.D.  
Founder of Gimli Congregation.*

He could leave his people now. His battling for them was done. His Secret was known to all of them at last. There was tenderness and pity welling up for him in many hearts while the days swiftly unraveled for him. His people knew now as he had known all along that the flogging of his worn diseased body must soon come to an end which it did in 1882.

Though three-score years (and ten) have passed since he left for a Farther Journey into a New Land, he still lives in the hearts of the grateful Icelandic people of Pembina County. There are only a few now living who knew him personally, yet the name of Pall Thorlaksson is familiar, almost a legend, to children of the third and fourth generations of those who — sick and hungry, broken in spirit and body — knew the unfailing love of the unsparing ministrations of a sick shepherd who could only think of the need of his flock.

(Condensed from a chapter entitled "SHEPHERD OF THE SUFFERING" in a book "LANTERNS OVER THE PRAIRIES" by Erling Nicolai Rolfsrud, Brainerd, Minn.)

## REV. GEORGE F. HARKINS, D.D.

### INTRODUCING THE U.L.C.A. REPRESENTATIVE TO OUR SYNOD CONVENTION

Sharing in the administration of the largest Lutheran body in the nation is the Rev. Dr. George F. Harkins, who has served as assistant to Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the United Lutheran Church in America, since June 1, 1949.

Dr. Harkins was pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church at Penbrook, Harrisburg, Pa., from 1940 to 1949, when he was elected to the newly-created position by the ULCA Executive Board.

In addition to his duties as administrative assistant to Dr. Fry, Dr. Harkins serves as secretary of the Committee of Executive Secretaries of the ULCA, and as assistant secretary and assistant treasurer of the Common Investing Fund of the church.

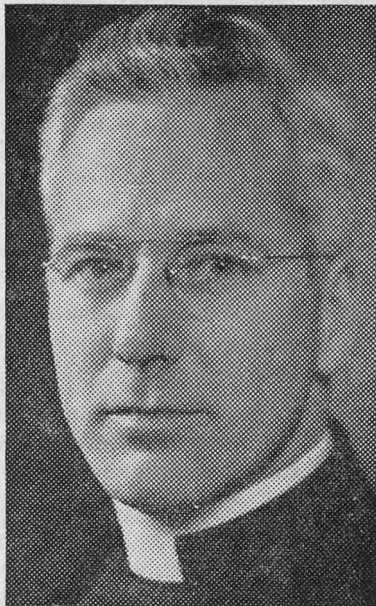
Dr. Harkins, who was born in Philadelphia, was graduated from John Harris High School at Harrisburg, Pa., and received his A.B. degree at Gettysburg College in 1937. He received his B.D. degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and his honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Muehlenberg College in June, 1954.

Dr. Harkins was ordained by the Central Pennsylvania Synod of the United Lutheran Church.

From 1946 to 1949, he conducted services of worship for the deaf by use of the sign language.

Dr. Harkins was a member of the board of trustees of the Tressler Orphans' Home, Loysville, Pa., from 1945 to 1950, and served as secretary of the East Pennsylvania Conference of the Central Pennsylvania Synod from 1947 to 1949.

He was a member of the Resettlement Committee of the National Lutheran Council from 1950 to 1953, serving in 1953 as its chairman. He is now a member of the executive committee of the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the



*The Rev. George F. Harkins, D.D.  
Official Representative of the United  
Lutheran Church in America.*

U.S.A. and a member of the Inter-seminary Committee.

Dr. and Mrs. Harkins are the parents of two sons: John and Paul. They reside in Bloomfield, N.J.

### AN EXTRA FROM SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Dr. George E. Goodman of the former Mouse River Parish in North Dakota, graduated on June 17th from the Medical Department of the University of California at Berkeley. He is the son of the late Walter and Margret Goodman of Upham, N.D.

Dr. Goodman will major in surgery and after his internship at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital at San Francisco, expects to continue his medical career in this area.



## SCHEDULE FOR SYNOD CONVENTION

(Seventieth Anniversary of Synod, Gimli, Manitoba, June, 1955)

All times stated are Central Daylight Saving. All gatherings are in the Gimli Lutheran Church except as otherwise stated. Programs conducted in English, unless otherwise stated.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 25th

5:00 to 7:00 p.m.—Registration of Guests and Delegates.

7:00 p.m.—Supper served by Gimli Deaconess Society. At this time Synod President will introduce special guests.

8:30 p.m.—Program, "A LOOK AT THE PRESENT".

Presidential Address. Brief reports of Treasurer and Secretary.  
Music provided by Gimli Lutheran Choir.

Memorial Address by Rev. G. Guttormsson and special offering to  
Pastors' Memorial Fund in memory of Rev. S. Christopherson.

### SUNDAY, JUNE 26th

9:00 to 10:30 p.m.—Service and Meeting at "Betel" (in Icelandic).

Sermon by Rev. Olafur Skulason.

Reports on Icelandic Homes for the Aged by Reverends S. Olafsson,  
E. S. Brynjolfsson and H. Sigmar, D.D.

11:00 a.m.—Synod Communion Service. Sermon: Rev. S. Olafsson.

(Offering for ULCA Board of American Missions.)

Registered guests and delegates will have noon dinner where they  
have been billeted, and will be guests of the parsonage for the  
evening meal at 6:00 p.m.

3:00 p.m.—70th Anniversary Observance, "A LOOK AT THE PAST".

Devotions conducted by President of Synod.

Address: "Some Aspects of the History of the Icelandic Lutheran  
Synod", the Rev. K. K. Olafsson.

Greetings to the Convention by the official representative of the  
State Church of Iceland, Rev. Olafur Skulason.

Response to these fraternal greetings and report of official repre-  
sentation to the Consecration of Iceland's Bishop, Dr. H. Sigmar.

"Recollections of a Pioneer Pastor," and Benediction, Dr. R.  
Marteinson.

(Music to be furnished by Choir and Pastor and Mrs. Eric Sigmar.)

7:00 to 8:00 p.m.—Meeting of Synod Ministerium.

8:30 p.m.—Evening Service. Devotions conducted by the Rev. Bragi  
Fridriksson.

Official presentation of "The Whole Program of the Whole Church".  
Rev. Dr. Geo. Harkins, United Lutheran Church representative.

Response by Rev. S. T. Guttormsson.

Music—Hymns and vocal solo by Sqdr. Leader D. Dunning, R.C.A.F.,  
Gimli.

(Afternoon and evening offerings for the work of the United Luth-  
eran Church through our Synod Treasury.)

### MONDAY, JUNE 27th

9:00 a.m.—Devotions by Rev. K. K. Olafsson.

Business Session.

Report of Credentials Committee in complete form.

Report of Agenda and Resolutions Committee.

Report of Synod and Publicity Committee.

Special Presentation of United Lutheran Church Evangelism.

Program by Rev. George Harkins.

Announcement of Convention Committees.

10:45 a.m.—Recess for all Committees to organize and meet.

12:00 noon—Dinner at The Sunrise Lutheran Camp served by the Husavick Ladies Aid.

1:00 p.m.—Business Session (Memorial Hall, Sunrise Camp).

a. Christian Education and Youth Work.

1. Presentation by Miss Hazel Prensler, Parish Worker.

2. Report by Chairman of Synod Committee, Mrs. Bonnie Bjarnarson.

3. Open Discussion and Resolution.

b. Women's Work.

1. Report of Lutheran Women's League.

2. Discussion and Resolution.

3. Manitoba Temperance Alliance Report.

c. Lutheran Laymen's Work. Open Discussion.

d. Unfinished business.

3:30 p.m.—Coffee Break.

4:00 p.m.—Husavick Church. Devotions by G. Guttormsson.

Stewardship Report by S. T. Guttormsson.

5:00 to 6:30 p.m.—Committee Meetings (held in various places).

7:30 p.m.—Supper at Arnes Hall.

9:00 p.m.—Icelandic Program in Arnes Church.

Devotions conducted by Rev. Bragi Fridriksson.

Address by Rev. E. S. Brynjolfsson, "Some Aspects of Our Relation to the State Church of Iceland".

Address by Rev. Olafur Skulason, "Skalholt".

(Special offering for Skalholt—to go through Synod.)

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 28th**

9:00 a.m.—Devotions conducted by Rev. S. T. Guttormsson.

a. Roll Call.

b. Report of Convention Committee on Homes for the aged.

c. Report of Convention Committee on Publications.

d. Report of Convention Committee on Evangelism.

e. Report of Convention Committee on Missions.

12:00 noon—Dinner served by Framsokn Ladies Aid, Gimli.

1:30 p.m.—Devotions conducted by Dr. H. Sigmar.

a. Presentation of Lutheran World Action and Relief by Dr. George Harkins. Discussion and resolutions.

b. Unfinished business.

3:30 p.m.—Coffee Break.

4:00 p.m.—

a. Report of Convention Committee on Stewardship.

b. Report of Convention Committee on Finance.

c. Unfinished business.

6:30 p.m.—Supper served by Framsokn Ladies Aid.

8:30 p.m.—Evening program, "A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE".

Devotions conducted by Rev. J. Fredriksson.

Address: "Mission Developing", Rev. Eric Sigmar.

"Preaching Missions", Rev. Robert Jack.

(Over)

Vocal Solo by Rev. S. T. Guttormsson.  
Choral Music: Gimli Lutheran Choir.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29th**

9:00 a.m.—Devotions.

- a. Annual Election of Officers and Committees.
- b. Constitutional Amendments, ULCA.
- c. Unfinished Business.

12:00 noon—Dinner served by Gimli Lutheran Dorcas Societies.

1:30 p.m.—Devotions.

- a. Unfinished Business.
- b. New Business.

3:30 p.m.—Coffee Break.

4:00 p.m.—Unfinished Business.

5:30 p.m.—Closing Devotions and Installation of President.

6:30 p.m.—Supper.

8:30 p.m.—YOUTH NIGHT.

Devotions conducted by Rev. Russel Weberg.

Program presented by Luther League "Caravaners" and other Young People.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 30th**

Post-Convention Excursion to Hecla Island.

Noon Dinner at Hecla Hall.

Service and program in Mikleyar Church.

Speakers: Rev. E. Brynjolfsson and Rev. S. Guttormsson.



Rev. Olafur Skulason  
Field Missionary of Synod, arrived  
just in time for the Convention. He  
is the official delegate of the State  
Church of Iceland.



Rev. Russel Weberg  
New Pastor of Calvary Lutheran  
Church, Seattle, Wash.



## A NEW VENTURE

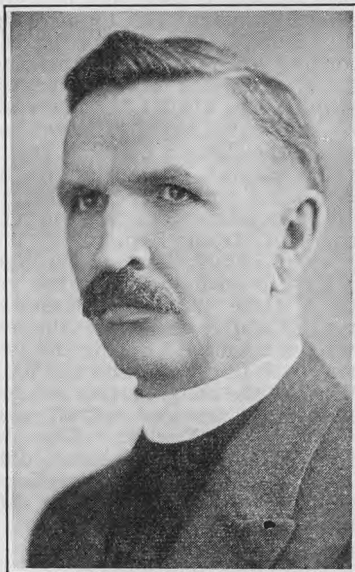
ERIC H. SIGMAR

Last winter the Board of American Missions of our United Lutheran Church sent me a call to develop a new mission congregation in Silver Heights, a brand new residential area in St. James, which in an independent suburb of Greater Winnipeg. The Board, in cooperation with our Synod, desired to establish a congregation in this fast-growing area, because here existed no Lutheran congregation, and in fact very few congregations of any denomination. The decision was dreadfully difficult. Only four years ago had I come to Calvary Church, Seattle, and the congregation was very close to my heart. But in a real and vital way I felt the call of God to come and organize a new congregation in this relatively un-churched area.

And now we are here on the new field, a new portion of God's vineyard. Silver Heights, where we now live, is about five miles from downtown Winnipeg. It is a community of over seven hundred new homes, and many apartment houses. To the West of Silver Heights, and away from Winnipeg, are many other new suburban communities, all part of St. James municipality: Woodhaven, Sturgeon Creek, Kirkfield Park, etc. In none of these growing communities is there a Lutheran Church. The field seems very promising. The Anglicans and the United Church are also working in this area. A large percentage of the people here are "un-churched". It is with this group of people that we must concentrate our efforts. The Gospel's message of Christ's Church must be brought to them. The hundreds of little children in this new area must be brought into Sunday School and taught our Saviour's Way and Truth. There are also a number of Lutheran families in this area who belong to congregations a few miles away in the city. Some of them might desire to join a Lutheran church close at hand. There are other Lutheran families here who hold no membership in congregations of Winnipeg. They must be found and given an

opportunity to have a church home in their community.

This is important work. It is the Lord's work. It is challenging work. Last year our United Lutheran Church in America through its Board of Home (American) Missions established 65 new mission congregations in the United States and Canada. It is our hope that soon in Silver Heights another outpost for bringing God's Word, in the historic Lutheran faith of our fathers, will be established. We humbly ask for the prayers of all the people of our Synod in this "new venture" in faith.



REV. K. K. OLAFSON

He was president of Synod for twenty years. Last year he observed the 50th anniversary of his ordination. He is now retired and will live in California. He is engaged in translating Bishop Asmundur Gudmundsson's latest book **The Life of Jesus**. He is one of the principal speakers at the 70th Anniversary Convention.

## PARISH NEWS FLASHES

### *The First Lutheran, Winnipeg*

This church has had a good year. The attendance at the English morning services has been most encouraging. The same cannot, however, be said about the evening services which are conducted in Icelandic. The older members of the congregation, who appreciate that language are getting less inclined to attend meetings of any kind, and their number is being depleted each year, and there are few replacements. There is a large and growing Sunday School, a Young People's Society, three Ladies Aids, and a Men's Club in this church, all of which have been active during the year. The women's organizations have been particularly helpful financially. The Duplex Envelope System is used, and is finding increasing favour. The total receipts of this congregation during the year, according to the report of the treasurer at the last annual meeting, amounted to \$18,051.33. Extensive and expensive repairs have been made to the Church building, including the stained glass windows and the heating plant. The pastor conducts a weekly confirmation class each year from September until Pentecost. Four Communion Services have been held during the year with a large number communing. Several Family, or Fellowship services have been held during the year, where both the senior and the junior sections of the congregation are combined. Such services are of course conducted in English. The two choirs of the church are doing splendid work under the direction of the organist and choir leader, Mrs. Eric Isfeld.

### *The Gimli Parish*

Gimli Parish experienced a wonderful week from May 8th to 15th, when Pastor Frank K. Efird of Salisbury, North Carolina, came, saw, and conquered the hearts of young and old alike with his friendly personality, Christian kindness, and charming Southern accent. This young pastor with his ability to speak in a manner interesting to all, filled the church ten times during

the week, even though the last day was a very rainy one. The young people particularly responded to his call, and many of them went out visiting to invite others to the services. As Pastor Sigmar put it, "It has been like a shot in the arm to us all." We hope and pray that we will be better Christians for what we have gained from the inspiring messages and example of Pastor Efird.

On May 22nd, seventeen young people were confirmed in the Gimli church, and at Hecla the same evening another seven became members. These seven were all close relatives of Mr. Kris. Tomasson, in whose memory a set of lights were dedicated at the Hecla church that day, the gift of his widow and family. The pastor and others had a very difficult time getting to Big Island that weekend in the rain, and the return journey, ordinarily taking 2½ hours, took them eleven hours to make. Though the members of the Hecla congregation had to walk or travel by tractor to church, the church was filled to the doors. Delegates to the Synod convention will have an opportunity to visit this island parish if road conditions improve sufficiently by then.

We hope you heard the Fishermen's Festival broadcast from Gimli on May 29th. Our next project is to get everything ready for a warm welcome for the delegates to the convention, June 25th-30th. It will include meals served by all the ladies' groups, hospitality by the people of Arnes, Husavick and Hecla, and a visit to Sunrise Lutheran Camp on the final evening. You can all help us by praying for warm sunny weather during the convention days!

### *The Selkirk Parish*

A meeting of the congregation held on May 30th, elected delegates to Synod: Mr. and Mrs. Johann Peterson, Mrs. J. E. Erickson, Mrs. Gudrun Indriadason. Alternates: Mr. and Mrs. A. Kurbis.

Easter services very well attended. Unusually many members came to Mother's Day Services, very largely

attended by families. Whitsunday services unforgettable. Fourteen confirmed, seven new members received beside Confirmation Class.

#### *The Arborg-Riverton Parish*

Easter Services were held this year only at Arborg and Riverton because weather and road conditions did not permit holding services at other points in the parish. Seeding was very much delayed throughout the area.

Whitsunday Services were held at Arborg, Geysir and Riverton. The weather having improved considerably the attendances seemed to respond to the mood of nature! Confirmations at Arborg and Riverton will take place in June.

Vidir is pushing forward with its project of building a new Community Hall which will also be used as a place of worship.

Dr. and Mrs. Steingrímur Thompson of Riverton have left on a two months tour of Iceland and Scandinavia. They will, in all probability, visit England enroute.

ARCTIC LIVING, a book written by our Pastor is a story of Grimsey Island, Iceland. The book is now in proof form and will, in all probability, be published simultaneously in Toronto, London and New York. The Ryerson Press of Toronto is making the final arrangements and Vihjalmur Stefansson has written the Preface. In a letter to the Ryerson Press, Mr. Stefansson writes: "The Island of Grimsey is the chess-players' paradise of the Arctic Sea. ARCTIC LIVING is potentially one of the most fascinating island tales of our globe, and Robert Jack has certain special gifts for telling it."

#### *The Lundar Parish*

The Reporter has sent to our Desk a number of their recent Church Bulletins which present a picture of much helpful and hopeful activity. It is quite evident that the church work in this Parish has taken on a new lease of life under the able leadership of the Rev. B. Fridriksson. Congratulations.

We quote from two of these Bulletins: "The signs of spring should lead us to a better understanding of the Love of God for everyone and

help us to enjoy the signs of spring within which are Joy, Peace and other blessings which only our Heavenly Father can give."

"The Duplex Envelope System is the future for us (at Lundar) as far as the giving of money is concerned."

"Remember that a Prayer for the Church is the best gift you can give, for without God we can do nothing. If we pray we mean that we are willing to do our part so that the Kingdom of God may be on earth as it is in heaven."

On Pentecost Sunday eight Young People were confirmed.

Delegates to Synod are Mrs. Leo Danielson and Mr. W. F. Breckman.

#### *The Langruth Parish*

Our Easter Service was conducted by the Rev. Braggi Fridriksson of Lundar. We are struggling to keep up the interest and strength of our Luther League and Sunday School, but we sadly need the services of a regular pastor to keep things alive here.

We are hopeful of getting the Rev. Olafur Skulason for one or two months when he arrives from Iceland this summer. We have a class of nine confirmands which we have been instructing during the year and will be ready for confirmation shortly after the arrival of Pastor Skulason.

Our delegates to the Synod Convention at Gimli are Messrs. Helgi A. Thompson and Valdi Valdimarson.

(Editor: We have a promise of an article on our Mission Work in Liberia for the next issue of Parish Messenger by our Missionary J. K. Polson, who is our Reporter's brother.)

#### *The Cavalier Parish*

The United Lutheran Brotherhood sponsored a 'King's Men Attendance Crusade' during the Lenten season. The Crusade was a huge success, bringing 295 more worshippers to the Sunday morning worship services during Lent this year than came in the same period last year. The average attendance during the Crusade (seven Sundays) was 153. Attendance for the month of April (the Crusade ended Easter Sunday, April 10th), averaged 197, and 155 for May;

the highest previous monthly average was 133 for November 1953.

The Brotherhood also sponsored a project to complete a room over the narthex of the church, for a Sunday School classroom. The members spent 20 evenings completing the job.

In the area of Christian education, United Lutheran has just completed its first year of Weekday Church School. Pupils of the 5th, 6th and 7th grades met in the Church for one hour after public school on Wednesday afternoons. While the response was small for this first year, the benefits were great, and we look forward to larger attendance next year. The Vacation Bible School will begin on June 6th; so far 83 pupils from the 1st through the 8th grades have registered for this school.

On Sunday, April 24th, United Lutheran joined with its sister church, Emmanuel of Bathgate, in presenting the "Sons for the Ministry Appeal" of the Synod of the Northwest. Pastor Guttormsson exchanged pulpits with Pastor Wasgatt of Dresden, N.D., for the occasion.

Eight boxes of clothing were forwarded by members of United Lutheran in response to the Spring Clothing Appeal of the Lutheran World Relief.

A student at the North Dakota State School for the Blind, Albert Morlock, was elected president of the parish Luther League in mid-May. He will continue in office for the year 1955-56.

A class of 10 young persons was confirmed at United Lutheran on Pentecost Sunday, May 29th.

### *The Minneota Parish*

Our news this time concerns finances mostly. That is because the trustees of our largest congregation, when working in that special field, dug up a hidden treasure. And they are willing to share the discovery with others.

The story is this. The trustees of St. Paul's Congregation conducted an "every member canvass" early last year. They handed small, plain envelopes to all persons who wished to pay their pledges in instalments during the year. The result was an improvement in church attendance

and a balance of almost \$1,600 in the treasury on January 1st, 1955. Included in this balance were sums collected for missions and benevolences during the latter half of 1954. That money had not been "sent in". The value of the every member canvass and the envelope system may not be news to some other congregations; but to us it was a real find. We recommend this method to others.

Lincoln and Vesturheim did very well financially in the past year too, though the results were not quite so spectacular. The Lincoln people paid out several hundred dollars for improving the interior of their church.

The merger of St. Paul's and Vesturheim, voted by both congregations last year, was put into effect at the annual meeting at St. Paul's this winter. Both congregations had been worshipping in St. Paul's for several years, and the merger bears its name. The church building and other properties of Vesturheim were handed over to a separate board which is to manage or sell these assets for the benefit of Vesturheim Cemetery.

The merger was celebrated by a special service and a fellowship luncheon on a Sunday in March. Instead of going home to lunch after the service, the people brought their lunches with them to the church parlors, and "a good time was had by all". Many persons have wished for a continuation of this "new" after-service function which, by the way, is as old as Christianity itself.

The United Congregation raised the pastor's salary by \$400 a year, above the sum paid heretofore by both congregations. And to cap the climax, the people handed the pastor and his wife a free-will offering of \$1,200, as a special bonus.

On Good Friday this year 88 people received Communion in St. Paul's—the largest number that has received the Lord's Supper in that church at any one time in 37 years or more.

### *Point Roberts*

Sunday School has been active all year, and now as summer approaches our attendance is increasing as our summer visitors return to their



Beach homes. To start off the Lenten Season, the Sunday School teachers gave a party to all the Sunday School pupils and their friends at the Grange Hall. Games were played, and singing enjoyed, after which a delicious supper was served.

At the close of the Lenten Season we showed the picture "Journey to Faith" to our Sunday School pupils and many friends. The picture was very good and was much appreciated by the group. After the show, a picnic supper was served, games were played, and then it was time to go home.

On Easter Sunday our church was well filled for our Easter Service, with Dr. H. Sigmar in the pulpit. The church was beautifully decorated with spring flowers. During the service the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Sand was christened. He was named Lary Einar. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Einar Sand, were witnesses.

A beautiful wedding was solemnized at our church on Sunday, May 1st, when Helen Bertha, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lendert Van Oosten, became the bride of Mr. Thomas Fenwick, son of the late Thomas and Mrs. Fenwick of Ladnes, B.C. Rev. K. Simundsson officiated at the double ring ceremony.

Our community was deeply saddened by the death of two of our beloved older citizens. Mrs. Helga Julius passed away on May 19th, after a lingering illness. And on May 22nd, Steinnun, beloved wife of Thordur Thorsteinson passed away quietly in her sleep after a brief illness.

The "flu" reached epidemic proportions here at the Point during the month of May. It seems now to have abated and most all who "caught it" are able to be up and about again. We are most grateful for these recent warm sunny days which have helped so many of our sick to rally.

On May 12th, the community sponsored a 25th Wedding Anniversary celebration for Mr. and Mrs. Arni Thorsteinson at the Grange Hall, Point Roberts. Congratulations poured in from far and near. (The Editor wishes here to include on behalf of the Parish Messenger our special congratulations, since Mrs.

Thorsteinson is one of our faithful Reporters.)

### *The Seattle Parish*

April was a record month for attendance in our church. The average for six services was 178.

Two identical Services were held on Easter Sunday with a total attendance of 415. Dr. Edward Palmason sang a solo and the choir also provided special music.

The Luther League presented its annual "Concert in Comedy" on May 6th.

The Annual Spring Choir Concert will be held on May 27th. The Senior Choir will present two groups of sacred selections. Dr. Edward Palmason and Mr. Tani Bjornson will both sing solo selections. A new feature at this concert will be the appearance of the Ballard High School Octette of which Dennis Bjornson of our church is a member. Following the concert, the Deacons of the church will serve coffee and refreshments.

A "Building Fund" for a new church has begun! Since Easter gifts have been thus designated, and plans are underway.

Confirmation was held on Whit-sunday, May 29th, with 15 young people confirmed. The same evening Pastor Sigmar conducted his "Farewell Service" as he has accepted a call from the Board of Home Missions of the U.L.C.A. to develop a new congregation in the Silver Heights suburb of Winnipeg. Following the service a "farewell party" was given for Pastor and Mrs. Sigmar when they were presented with gifts, and loving expressions of thanks and kindness by the congregation.

Pastor Russel W. Weberg, our new Pastor, conducted his Opening Service on June 5th followed by a Social Hour of welcome.

The Sunday School picnic was held on June 12th. After a Family Service in the church at 10.00 a.m. when S.S. Attendance Awards were presented, the congregation drove out to beautiful Lake Meridian near Kent for the Picnic activities.

Delegates to the Synodical Convention at Gimli are Messrs. Sibbie



and Valdimar Kristjanson and Charlie Anderson.

### *The Svold Parish*

Rev. S. Guttormsson brought the Easter Message of "Awakening Life" to St. Peter's church of Svold at an evening service on Easter Day. The church attendance was very good. Many of our young people who have been away at school were able to attend making is especially joyful for all.

The St. Peter Sunday School began its summer session April 24th with a membership of 52. Mrs. Garnet Mountain, one of the younger members of our parish, is our new superintendent. Mrs. K. D. Dinna-son is the organist and Mrs. Palmi Hannesson, secretary-treasurer. The school has a teaching staff of eight. They are Mrs. Nordal Quam, Mrs. Alvin Dalsted, Mrs. Frank Pleasance, Mrs. Walter Clifford, Mr. K. D. Din- nisson, Margaret Thordarson, Eldean Hillman and Mrs. Wilbur Johnson.

We are happy to have our beloved pastor, Dr. Sigmar again with us. He conducted services at St. Peter's on Sunday the 24th of April and again on Mother's Day. The choir sang as a special number the hymn, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go".

Janice Kay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clark and Kurtwood Stone, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Hillman, were received in the church by Holy Baptismal. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Clark were sponsors for Janice Kay and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Sturlaugson for Kurtwood Stone.

### *The Mountain Parish*

We, of the Mountain Parish, are very happy and indeed very fortunate to have our former Pastor, Dr. H. Sigmar, and Mrs. Sigmar back with us again, even though it is for so short a while. While he is with us, Dr. Sigmar will confirm this year's class and it is interesting to note that these Confirmands were also baptized by Dr. Sigmar when he was with us before.

Rev. Bragi Fridrikson was a guest speaker at the Baccalaureate Services, Sunday, May 22nd. He spoke briefly about his childhood in Iceland, which he did very colorfully

and interestingly. Pastor Sigmar preached the Baccalaureate sermon.

The Mountain Sunday School reopened May 1st. Mr. Arnold Christ- anson is our superintendent, Mrs. Wm. Olgeirson, Organist and Jacque- line Thorfinnson, Secretary-Treas- urer. We have fourteen teachers and twelve substitute teachers. For the past four years, our Sunday School has had an enrollment of over a hundred students. We are very proud of our Perfect Attendance Record. In 1954, there were fifty-five receiving Perfect Attendance Awards, six received the White Bible, the award for three years Perfect Attendance and five received the six-year award. Six others re- ceived recognition for over six years Perfect Attendance.

Pastor Sigmar says: "It has been a pleasant experience for us to move back for a while into the Parsonage, which we vacated almost ten years ago—and to be received with so much kindness throughout the whole Parish. Since we came here on April 15th, 27 services have been con- ducted throughout the whole Parish, and the church attendance, on the whole, has been excellent."

Pastor Bragi Fridrikson of Lundar, Man., was the guest preacher at five services on May 22nd. A large con- firmation class that had been in- structed by Miss Lauga Geir thru this winter will be confirmed at Gar- dar by Pastor Sigmar, before the end of June, and a smaller class, which had been instructed in connection with the Sunday School at Moun- tain by Mrs. Jack Thorfinnson and Mrs. William Olgeirson will be con- firmed in July.

### *The Akra Parish*

Vidalin Sunday School resumed its summer session May 1st, at 10 a.m. with 46 children enrolling, to date five more children have joined our ranks. The teaching staff consists of Mrs. Gisli Sampson, Eugene Vatns- dal, Mrs. Ray Beckers, Mrs. Sig Thorlakson, Mrs. Steini Bjornson, Marlys Johnson, Mrs. Bill Magnus- son, Mrs. Ted Vatnsdal, Mrs. E. M. Erlendson and Mrs. Sam Olafson as the Superintendent. Mrs. Sig Thor- lakson is our organist. We have

# THE SYNOD TREASURER SPEAKS:—

## CONGREGATIONAL RECEIPTS

	App. General Benevolence	L.W.A.	Foreign Miss.	Amer. Miss.	Misc.	TOTAL
Arborg, Ardals .....		25.00				25.00
Arnes .....	15.75	23.02				38.77
Baldur Immanuel .....	150.00	15.00				165.00
Grund Frelsis .....	70.00					70.00
Brown, Gudbrands .....	52.00					52.00
Cavalier, United Luth.....	656.26	32.90	79.10		175.93	944.19
Churchbridge, Logberg .....						
Concordia .....	41.50					41.50
Thingvallanylendu .....	50.00					50.00
Cypress River, Bru .....	130.00	27.30				157.30
Gimli .....	718.00	166.75		101.67	40.00	1026.42
Glenboro .....	203.00					203.00
Hecla, Mikleyar .....	100.00	40.00				140.00
Hnausa .....						
Husavik, Vidines .....	50.00	10.00				60.00
Langruth, Herdubreidar .....	260.00			10.00	58.00	328.00
Lundar .....	94.00					94.00
Minneota, St. Paul's .....	400.00				5.30	405.30
Westerheims .....	70.00					70.00
Lincoln .....	148.80					148.80
Mountain, Fjalla .....	130.00					130.00
Hallson .....		6.85				6.85
Peter's .....	35.00	.62				35.62
Vidalins .....	296.60	7.47				304.07
Vikur .....	50.00					50.00
Point Robers, Trinity .....	52.00	35.00				87.00
Riverton, Braedra .....	100.00					100.00
Seattle, Calvary .....	490.00	127.77				617.77
Selkirk .....	250.00	82.50	50.00			385.20
Silver Bay .....						
Vancouver .....	300.00					300.00
Vidir .....						
Winnipeg, First Luth.....	1350.00	122.26			100.00	1572.26
Blaine .....	218.60	23.00	39.55			281.15
Geysir .....						

N. O. BARDAL.

seven candidates for Confirmation who hope to begin their instruction soon.

Dr. H. Sigmar held his first service in our congregation April 17th, at 8 p.m. At this service two infants were received into the church through Baptism, namely: Lynn Brian, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Brooks of Walhalla, and Cynthia Jean, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Sott of Hensel. Mr. and Mrs. Sig

Thorlakson were sponsors for Lynn Brian as were Mr. and Mrs. Orville Thorlakson for Cynthia Jean. Dr. Sigmar has come to serve our parish through May, June and into July.

A service was held May 22nd at 2 p.m. with Rev. Bragi Fridriksson of Lundar, Man., as guest pastor. Dr. H. Sigmar served at liturgist. For a special number, Mrs. Sam Olafson and Mrs. Sig Thorlakson sang a duet, "The Saviour for Me".

## THE STEWARDSHIP SECRETARY SPEAKS—

A member of First Lutheran, Winnipeg, has suggested that we substitute another term for the word "Stewardship". Mr. Victor Jonason would like to use the term "Practical Christianity". I like his idea, and I appreciate the thought he has given it. It seems that some kind of change is in order, because the term "Stewardship" does not carry the full load of meaning it started out with. Bumps along the road and careless usage have spilled much of its precious cargo. It used to mean much in terms of Church life; now it means merely "money-for-the-church".

Let's be PRACTICAL about it! When we neglect the practice of our faith, our faith itself dies. Jesus was very practical when he instructed the disciples to think of their relationship to Him as one of branches to the vine. He warned them sternly that unless branches bear fruit, they are trimmed off by the vinedresser, or waste away from their own lack of vitality. Christian faith must bear fruit in Christian action. Looking at it in cold, practical terms, the Church doesn't need your time, it doesn't need your talents, it doesn't even need your money! This may be the greatest of shocks, but the truth is, that the Church can get along without you! Here is the practical truth: You need the Church! The Church is the channel for your faithful fruit-bearing. Without that channel for your active Christian endeavor, your Christian faith would be checked off, it would die quickly. The Church, both in your home town and through the missionaries in India, is like a pair of extensions for your arms, enabling you to do the work of our Christian faith in a way you could never manage by yourself.

Let's be PRACTICAL about the money end of it too! There are as many approaches to economics as there are people. The thief says, "What you have belongs to me so I'll take it!" The Communist says, "Everything should belong to everyone, so the state will take everything, and divide it among the party faithful." The capitalist says, "Every man for himself!" The Christian

says, "You are in need. I have plenty; I will share mine with you." The Christian approach to the whole problem of economics has always been one of sharing. This is part of what is meant when we talk of the "Christian Way of Life". "And now, suppose that a man has the worldly goods he needs, and sees his brother go in want; if he steels his heart against his brother, how can we say that the love of God dwells in him? My little children, let us show our love by the true test of action, not by talking phrases on our lips." (I John 3:17-18, Knox.)

That last sentence of St. John's should have special significance for us as we prepare for our annual Synod convention. Somehow we have a knack for making noble comments and high sounding speeches, and then being swayed by our own words we go on to make bold resolutions that are seldom followed by appropriate action. The weakness of our Synod lies in the fact that we seem unable to practice our Christian faith! Unless we find the key to such "Practical Christianity", our days are numbered.

Some will say that the key to Practical Christianity is to set out to do only that which we know we are capable of doing ("taking the lowest common denominator"). It seems to me that the key is actually something quite different. It is something for which we pray each time we utter the Lord's Prayer. It is simply dedicating one's self to doing God's will! "Thy will be done." Practical Christianity is the straining of every nerve, every muscle, every resource, every penny, every minute, every brain cell to the glorious job of doing what God wants us to do. You can hardly be more practical! You can hardly be more Christian!

S. T. GUTTORMSSON.

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### THE REPORTERS' CORNER

New Reporters in this issue: Mrs. Jack Thorfinnson for Mountain, N.D.; Mrs. Anna Hillman for Svold, N.D.; Mrs. Sam Olafson for Akra, N.D.